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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/566,966

10/13/2006

Christof Erban

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09/21/2011

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ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

HERRING, BRENT W

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3633

NOTIFICATION DATE

DELIVERY MODE

09/21/2011

ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/566,966	Applicant(s) ERBAN, CHRISTOF	
	Examiner BRENT W. HERRING	Art Unit 3633	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 August 2011.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on ____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.
- 4) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 20,23-35 and 39-42 is/are pending in the application.
- 5a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 40 is/are allowed.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 20,23,26-33,35,39 and 42 is/are rejected.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 24,25,34 and 41 is/are objected to.
- 9) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 10) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 02 February 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.
2. Claims 20, 23, 26-27-33, 35-36, 38 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sufke, US 4,793,112 in view of Prase, US 2,649,135.

Regarding claim 20:

‘112 discloses a laminated, plate-shaped element comprising: at least a first and a second substrate (1, 2, see Fig. 1), which are joined together, at least indirectly, by surface bonding by a layer of curable casting resin adhesive bonding (3) to form a bonded joint;

at least one support element (8) positioned in the first substrate (1) capable of fastening the laminated element to an infrastructure; and

‘112 does not disclose the remainder of the claim with regards to the active position fastening.

‘135 discloses an active position fastening (21, 14) of a second substrate relative to a first substrate, at least in the event of failure of a bonded joint (col. 2, lns. 7-12), wherein the active position fastening is active only between the first and second substrates (12) and is placed a certain distance from edges of the first and second substrates, and

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the active position fastening comprises at least one fastening element (14, 21) passing through a plane of a bonded assembly between the first and second substrates and engaging in a recess in each of the first and second substrates.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art (herein abbreviated as ATI-OPOSA) to provide active position fasteners as taught by '135 to the laminate of '112 in order to achieve a permanent connection between adjacent panels.

In modifying '112 in view of '135, the active position fastening element of '135 combined with the adhesively bonded laminate of '112 would pass through the layer of adhesive bonding of '112. Note that '135 discloses connectors 25 that are activated when the adjacent panels are joined just as the adhesive of '112 connects the adjacent panels when they are joined.

Regarding claim 23:

'112 discloses further comprising a recess (5) in at least one of the substrates that is a through-drill hole (see Fig. 1).

Regarding claim 26:

'135 discloses wherein the fastening element is a cylindrical pin.

Regarding claim 27:

'135 discloses wherein the fastening element does not project from outer surfaces of the first and second substrates.

Regarding claims 28:

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‘135 discloses visual masking in a region of the active position fastening.

Note that the panel surface 15 masks the active position fastening element.

Furthermore, in combining ‘112 and ‘135 ATI-OPOSA to use visual masking on the transparent element of ‘112 in order to conceal the element for aesthetics.

Note that the courts have found that matters relating to ornamentation only, which have no mechanical function, cannot be relied upon to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art.

Regarding claims 29, 30 and 32:

‘135 discloses wherein a fastening element for the active position fastening is fastened and immobilized by adhesive bonding by an assembly of the first and second substrates with the adhesive, in a recess into which the fastening element is introduced. Should applicant dispute fastening by adhesive bonding, note that it would have been obvious to persons of ordinary skill in the art to further apply the adhesive into the recesses without revealing any extraordinary or unexpected results, since adhesive bonding for increased bonding strength is well known in the art.

Regarding claim 31:

‘135 discloses wherein the fastening element comprises at least one element capable of deforming elastically or plastically upon introduction of the fastening element into the recess.

Regarding claim 33:

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‘135 discloses further comprising at least one functional element placed between the first and second substrates (insulation component in the void 22).

Regarding claim 35:

‘112 discloses claim 20, wherein an edge of the laminated element is joined to support elements (13).

Regarding claim 36:

‘112 discloses a laminated, plate-shaped element comprising: at least a first and a second substrate (1, 2), joined together by a layer of curable casting resin adhesive bonding (3) to form a bonded joint, indirectly via a spacing means; at least one support element (8) associated with the first substrate to fasten the laminated element to an infrastructure;

‘112 does not disclose the active position fastening.

‘135 discloses an active position fastening (21, 14) of the second substrate relative to the first substrate, at least in the event of failure of the bonded joint, wherein

the active position fastening is active, independently of the support element, only between the spacing means and the first or the second substrate, and

the active position fastening comprises at least one fastening element passing through the spacing means and engaging in a respective recess in each of the first and second substrates.

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ATI-OPOSA to provide active position fasteners as taught by '135 to the laminate of '112 in order to achieve a permanent connection between adjacent panels.

Regarding claim 38:

'135 discloses wherein the active position fastening comprises at least one fastening element passing through the spacing means and engaging in a recess in each substrate.

Regarding claim 42:

'112 in view of '135 discloses wherein at least one of the first and second substrates includes an outer surface of the laminated element being flush with a respective end of the fastening element.

Note that when utilizing dowel-like structures (14) as disclosed by '135 with a laminate as taught by '112, the outer surface of the laminated element would be flush with a respective end of the fastening element. Fastening elements (14) extend through the ledge elements (11 and 10) of '135 and lie flush with an outer surface thereof. In modifying '112 in view of '135, no extraordinary or unexpected results are achieved by making fastening elements as suggested by '135 flush with the outer surfaces of the laminated element of '112.

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3. Claim 39 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sufke, US 4,793,112 in view of Prase, US 2,649,135 as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Florentin et al., US 6,052,965.

Regarding claim 39:

'965 discloses an opaque colored layer (7, see Fig. 1) in a region of an edge on a surface of the first substrate.

ATI-OPOSA to use an opaque colored layer in a region of an edge of a surface of the first substrate for purposes of aesthetic enhancement.

Note that the courts have found that matters relating to ornamentation only, which have no mechanical function, cannot be relied upon to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 24, 25, 34 and 41 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

5. Claim 40 is allowed.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed 8/10/2011 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

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7. Regarding applicant's argument that "surface bonding" explicitly means that the two substrates are bonded by the adhesive layer substantially over the entire surface, examiner can find no specific statement in paragraphs [0010] and [0046] of the specification that define surface bonding as such.

8. Regarding applicant's argument that Prase does not disclose a laminated element having two substrates joined together by surface bonding, examiner disagrees. Col. 2, Ins. 10-15 expressly state, "at least at the points at which ledges 10, 17 are positioned, is provided with a film or glue or synthetic resin. The specification of Prase further expounds on the use of glue for surface bonding the laminate panel. Col. 2, Ins. 53-54 state, "if packing materials are employed which are not compounded with a binding means," further suggesting surface bounding.

9. Regarding applicant's argument that Prase does not disclose the dowels (14) acting as position fastening elements, examiner disagrees. Col. 3, Ins. 40-45 specify, "the bore holes and the dowels are preferably provided with glue in order to achieve a firm connection of the parts with one another." Also, col. 2, In. 55 to col. 3, In. 5 states, "if the filling materials are mixed with a binding agent it is possible to dispense with the ledges 10, 11 and their dowels 14, as the filling materials containing the binding agent enable a sufficiently firm and rigid connection with the panel sides or surfaces." Thus, Prase does disclose that the dowels contribute to bonding the adjacent layers. Note that Prase suggests it would be possible to dispense of the dowels if the binding agent enables a sufficient connection between surfaces. Examiner maintains that utilizing both dowels and adhesive to provide redundancy to the connection is suggested by

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Prase and furthermore, combining multiple connecting means to provide redundancy yields no extraordinary or unexpected results.

Conclusion

10. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to BRENT W. HERRING whose telephone number is (571)270-3661. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday, 10:00AM-7:30PM EST.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Brian Glessner can be reached on (571)272-6754. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/B. W. H./
Examiner, Art Unit 3633

/Robert J Canfield/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3635